

THE
Chap-Book
SEMI-MONTHLY

Contents for November 15, 1894

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NOVEMBER 15TH 1894



Louise Mosgen Quincy.

ON A PORTRAIT OF POE

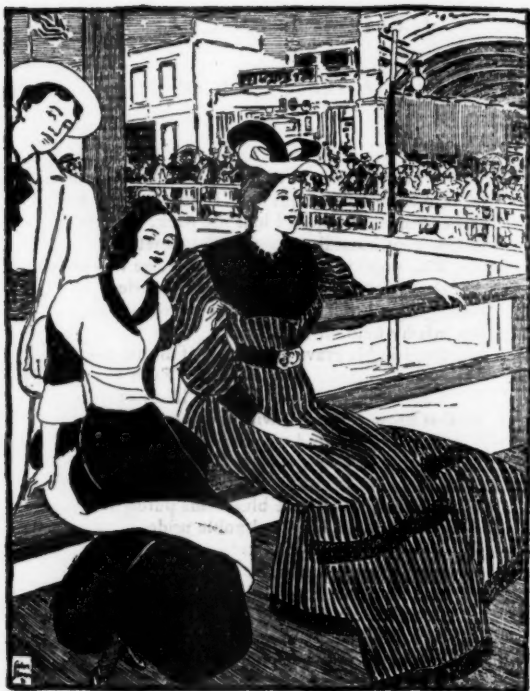
I.

HE was by vicious curs bayed and beset
When he passed by the gateway of this world
On his immortal quest. He stopped and hurled
Some gems that crippled half the pack, and yet
A few went hounding him until he met
The angel in whose dark plumes he was furled.
Unutterable scorn that proud lip curled,
Unlanguaged grief those eyes of sorrow wet.
But infamy held off until he lay
Dead in his grave and shorn of all his might,
Then fiercely struck—not boldly. Even to-day
The hand that drives its little lance of spite
At that brow chapleted with fadeless bay
Belies its aim and trembles with affright.

II.

Thou gentleman! whose blue veins purely ran
Ancestral chastity and noble pride,
Thy fate was and is hard—to be belied
By lepers of an ignominious clan.
It matters not that thou didst lay the plan
Of a new era reaching far and wide
And builded for us on Time's golden tide
More than the pleasure domes of Kubla Khan.—
It matters not that advocates for thee,
And worthy of thee, thy true greatness tell.—
Thou art an outlaw, and Persephone,
When she beheld thy shade august and fell,
Shrank with her pallid court and frantically
Slammed, locked, and bolted every door of hell!

JOHN H. BONER.



A DRAWING BY JOHN SLOAN

THE LAND OF THE STRADDLE-BUG

CHAPTER I.

EARLY in the gray and red dawn of a March morning in 1883, two wagons moved slowly out of Boomtown, the two-years-old "giant of the plains." As the teams drew past the last house, the strangeness of it all appealed irresistibly to the newly arrived immigrant. The town lay behind them on the level, treeless plain like a handful of blocks pitched upon a russet robe. Its houses were mainly shanties of pine one-story in height, while here and there actual tents or covered-wagons gleamed in the half-light with infinite suggestion of America's restless emigration.

The wind blew fresh and chill from the west. The sun rose swiftly, and the vast thin scarf of cloud melted away, leaving the illimitable sweep of sky arching in unutterable majesty the almost equally majestic plain. There was a poignant charm in the air—a smell of freshly uncovered sod, a width and splendor in the view which exalted the movers in a subtle way.

The prairie was ridged here and there with ice and the swales were full of posh and water. Geese were slowly winging their way against the wind and ducks were sitting here and there on the ice-rimmed ponds. The plain was mainly burned black and bare, and so firm with frost that the wagon chuckled noisily as it passed over it, the whistle of the driver called afar startling the ducks from their all-night resting places.

One of the teams drew a load of material for a house, together with a few household utensils. The driver, a thin-faced, blue-eyed man of thirty, walked beside his team. His eyes were full of wonder, but he walked in silence.

The second team was loaded with boxes and barrels of groceries and hardware and was driven by a handsome young

man with a large brown mustache. His name was Bailey and he seemed to be leading the way for his companion, whom he called Burke.

As the sun rose wonders took place. The whole vast plain lifted at the horizon. The teams seemed crawling forever at bottom of an enormous bowl. Mystical forms came into view—grotesquely elongated, unrecognizable. Objects twenty, thirty miles away rose like apparitions astonishingly magnified. Willows became elms, a settler's shanty became a shot-tower—towns swam and palpitated in the yellow flood of light like shaken banners low-hung on unseen flag staffs.

Burke walked in silence. He was like one suddenly wakened in a new world. Nothing familiar. Not a tree or shrub. Not a mark of plow or harrow—everything wild and mystical and glorious.

Hour after hour they moved across the rolling sod. Hour after hour while the yellow sun rolled up the slope putting to flight the morning shapes on the horizon—striking the plain level again and warming the air into genial March. Hour after hour the wagons toiled on till the last house fell away to the east—till the road faded into a trail almost imperceptible on the firm sod.

At last they came to the land of "the straddle-bug," the squatters' watch dog, three boards nailed together like a stack of army muskets to mark a claim. Burke was like a man taking his first sea-voyage. His eyes searched the plain restlessly and his brain dreamed. Bailey, an old settler (of two years' experience), whistled and sung and shouted lustily to his team.

It drew toward noon. Bailey's clear voice shouted back—"When we reach that swell we'll see the Western Coteaux."

"There they rise," he called a little later.

Burke looked to the west. Low down on the horizon was a long blue bank, hardly more substantial than a line of cloud. "How far off are they?"

"About twenty-five miles. Our claims are just about in line with that gap." Bailey pointed with his whip—"and about twelve miles from here. We're on the unsurveyed land now."

Burke felt a thrill of exultation as he looked around him. In the distance teams were crawling like beetles. A couple of shanties newly built glittered like gold in the sun, and piles of yellow lumber, and straddle-bugs increased in number as they left the surveyed land and emerged into the finer tract which lay unsurveyed. At noon they stopped and fed their teams, eating their own food on the ground beside their wagons.

While they rested Bailey kept his eyes on their backward trail, watching for his partner Rivers. "It's about time Jim showed up," he said.

Burke seemed anxious. "They won't get off the track, will they?" Bailey laughed at his innocence.

"Jim Rivers has located about seventy-five claims out here this spring. I guess he won't lose his bearings."

"I'm afraid Blanche'll get nervous."

"O, Jim will take care of her. She won't be lonesome, either. He's a great favorite with the women. Well, this won't feed the baby," he ended, leaping up.

They were hitching up when a swift team came into sight and soon drew alongside. It was a plat-form spring wagon and contained a man and woman in the front seat and a couple of alert young fellows in the back seat. They held rifles in their hands and eyed the plain for game.

"Hello!" said the driver in a pleasant shout. "How you getting on?"

"Pretty well," replied Bailey.

"Should say you were."

Burke went up to the wagon. "Well Blanche—what do you think of it—far's you've got?"

"Not very much," replied his wife candidly. She was a handsome, buxom woman, but looked tired and a little cross.

"I guess I'll get out and ride with you," she said, rising.

"Why, no! What for?" said Rivers hastily. "Why not go right along out to the store with us?"

"Why, yes; that's the thing to do, Blanche. We'll be along soon," said Burke.

She sat down again, as if ashamed to give her reasons for not going on with these strange men. "I was just in the middle of a story, too," said Rivers humorously. "Well, so long," and cracking his whip, they dashed on. "We'll have supper ready when you arrive," Rivers shouted back.

Burke could not forget the look in his wife's eyes. It grew upon him that she was right, it would have been pleasanter if she had stayed with him. They had been married several years, but his love for her had not grown less. Perhaps for the reason that she dominated him.

She was handsome in a powerful way, while he was a plain man, slightly stooping, with thin brown face and prominent larynx. She had brought a little property to him, which was unusual enough to give her a sense of importance in all business transactions of the firm.

She had sold the farm in Illinois with great reluctance, and as Burke rode along on his load of furniture he recalled it all very vividly and it made him anxious about his wife's impression of the location of his claim. As he took her position for a moment he got a sudden sense of the loneliness and rawness of the plain which he had not felt before.

Twice they were forced to partly unload in order to cross ravines where the frost had fallen out, and it was growing dark as they rose over the low swell from which they could

see a dim red star which Burke felt to be the shanty light before Bailey called—

“There she blows!”

The wind had grown chill and moist, the quacking ducks seemed more numerous and strange noises came from ghostly swells and hidden ponds of water. The tired horses moved forward with soundless feet upon the sod which had softened during the day. They quickened their steps when they saw the light shine from the pale before the shanty.

The light of the lamp and the sight of Blanche standing in the doorway of the shanty, which stood back of the store-room, was a beautiful sight to Burke. Set over against the wild strange prairie with its boundless sweep of unknown soil, the shanty seemed radiant.

“Supper’s all ready, Howard,” called Blanche, and the tired man’s heart leaped with joy to hear the tender, familiar cadence of her voice. It was her happy voice. Bailey came out with one of the land-seekers.

“Go in to supper, boys; we’ll take care of the teams,” was his hearty command.

The tired men gladly did as they were bid and scooping up some water from a near-by hollow on the sod they washed their faces and sat down to a supper of chopped potatoes, bacon and eggs and tea, which Blanche placed steaming hot upon the table.

She was in high spirits. The novelty of the trip, the rude shanty, with its litter of shavings, and its boxes for chairs and bundles of hay for beds, gave her something the same pleasure a picnic might have done. It appealed to something primeval in her.

Rivers and the others came in and after supper there was a great deal of energetic talk. The young land-seekers were restless with delight over their claims, which they compared with the stumps and stones of Michigan.

"Why, it took three generations of my folks to clear off forty acres of land. They just wore themselves out on it. I told Hank he could have it and I'd go west and see if there wasn't some land out there which wouldn't take a man's life-time to grub out and smooth down. And I've found it," exulted a young Hoosier.

Rivers, it was plain, had won the friendship of Mrs. Burke. They were having a laugh together over by the table where she was washing the dishes. He admired her powerful arms frankly.

He had laughing brown eyes and a pleasant voice. He was fond of joking, especially with women, and was one of the most popular of the lawyers and land-agents in Boomtown. There was a boyish quality about him in his lighter moods which kept him giving and taking jocular remarks.

Bailey sometimes said: "Rivers would shine up to a seventy-year-old Sioux squaw if she was the only woman handy, but he don't mean anything by it, it's just his way. He's one o' the best fellows that ever lived." Others took a less favorable view of the land-agent.

Bailey took charge of things. "Now, fellers," he said, "we'll vamoose the ranch while Mrs. Burke turns in." He opened the way to the store-room and the men filed out, all but Burke, who remained to put up the calico curtain which Blanche had planned to put round their bed.

Blanche was a little disturbed at the prospect of sleeping behind such a thin barrier.

"O, it ain't no worse'n the sleeping car," Howard said.

A little later he stuck his head in at the store-room door. "All ready, Bailey."

Bailey was to sleep on the rickety lounge which served as bed-stead and chair.

Bailey went out to the front of the shanty to look at the lantern he had set up on a scantling. Rivers followed him.

"Going to leave that up there all night?"

"Yes. I keep it there every night. May keep some poor devil from wandering around all night on the prairie."

Rivers said with an abrupt lowering of the voice:

"Mrs. Burke is a hummer, ain't she? How'd his flat-chested nibs manage to secure her? I must get married, Bailey—no use."

Bailey laughed. "Wish you would, Jim, and relieve me of the cookin'."

Something electrical was in the air. It was all so strange, like being out of the world someway, and Blanche could hardly compose herself to sleep. "Isn't it wonderful," she whispered.

Burke heard the ducks quacking down in the "Moggason" and he *felt* the silence and immensity of the plain outside. It was enormous, incredible in its wildness. "I believe we're goin' to like it out here, Blanche," he said.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



LARKS AND NIGHTINGALES

DEDICATED
WITH PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND RESPECT TO
COLONEL THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON.

A LONE I sit at eventide;
The twilight glory pales,
And o'er the meadows far and wide
Chant pensive bobolinks.
(One might say nightingales!)

Song-sparrows warble on the tree,
I hear the purling brook,
And from the old "manse o'er the lea"
Flies slow the cawing crow.
(In England 'twere a rook!)

The last faint golden beams of day
Still glow on cottage panes
And on their lingering homeward way
Walk weary laboring men.
(Oh would that we had swains!)

From farm-yards, down fair rural glades
Come sounds of tinkling bells,
And songs of merry brown milk-maids,
Sweeter than oriole's.
(Yes, thank you—Philomel's!)

I could sit here till morning came,
All through the night-hours dark,
Until I saw the sun's bright flame
And heard the chickadee.
(Alas! we have no lark!)

We have no leas, no larks, no rooks,
No swains, no nightingales,
No singing milk-maids (save in books)—
The poet does his best.
It is the rhyme that fails!

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE

MR. MEREDITH AND HIS AMINTA

IN his latest book the choppiness of Mr. Meredith's style and the restless tacking of his method are as great as ever, and those worthy people who delight in the smooth seas and steady zephyrs of ordinary English fiction will find their experience of *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* very much of a stormy channel-passage. But to people with sound nerves and adventurous spirits the experience is sure to be bracing and exhilarating. Perhaps the most surprising single effect that one gets from *Lord Ormont* is that of the tingling vitality of the author. One can hardly realize while reading the book that one has to do with a writer who has been for forty years a tireless worker in literature, and who published his first venture in fiction two years before George Eliot's first story. The style in *Lord Ormont* has all the audacity of a first rebellion against tradition and convention; the sentences rush forward in all possible rhythms except the languorous ones of the dilettante or the "faultily faultless" ones of the precision or pedant; the imagination is restlessly self-assertive in its embodiment of every abstract idea in an image for eye or for ear; the tone is almost boisterous in its hilarity or brusqueness; and finally the book sounds everywhere the note of the future, and prophecies change and new social conditions without a touch of misgiving or regret. Perhaps in no earlier work has Mr. Meredith been so aggressive and, at the same time, so confident and buoyant.

As for Mr. Meredith's technique, it remains in the new book substantially what it has always been and many of the general effects he produces are familiar to his admirers and delightful in their recurrence. Where save in Mr. Meredith's fiction can there be found such brilliance of surface?

such vividness of dramatic portrayal? Or at any rate where is vividness so reconciled with suggestiveness of interpretation? concrete beauty with abstract truth? In all his novels he sends an imagination flashing over the surface of some portion of life; he calls up before us this portion of life in all its fine contrasts of color and form, of storm and sunshine, of mid-day and moonlight; and yet at the same time he constrains us to pierce below the surface and to understand intuitively why the drama moves this way or that, what forces are in conflict, what passions are flushing or blanching the cheek, what fancies or ideals are making the eyes dream on a distant goal.

More nearly than any other living novelist, Mr. Meredith succeeds in overcoming the difficulties forced on the writer of fiction by the double appeal of life. Life is a pageant and life is a problem; it smites on the senses and allures the imagination, but it also challenges the intellect; it has power and beauty, but it has also significance. Now most writers of fiction who reveal to us the inner meaning of life allow its beauty and power to fade into shadowy vagueness; and those who give us the dramatic value of life too often lack penetration and philosophic insight. One of Mr. Meredith's greatest claims of distinction lies in the fact that he better than any other English novelist has reconciled this conflict between vividness of portrayal and depth of interpretation. He has grasped English life in all its enormous range, and mass, and complexity; he has flashed it before us in all its splendid vividness for eye and ear and imagination; and at the same time he has made it suggestive to thought, has comprehended it through and through in its subtlest relations, and in portraying it has breathed into it the breath of a philosophical spirit.

If we analyze Mr. Meredith's pages carefully we find very few of those long disquisitions on character with which the

pages of a psychological novelist are covered. He deals almost as constantly with acts, with dialogue, with what meets the senses, the eye and the ear, as the elder Dumas. It is a mimic world of images he gives, not a globe of the earth with scientific terms and black marks on yellow paste board. He is always primarily an artist, not a psychologist or a descriptive sociologist. Too often when we finish one of George Eliot's stories we feel that she has explained her characters so exhaustively that we should not know them if we met them on the street. We have had so much to do with their ganglia and their nervous systems and with the ashes of their ancestors that we have little notion of the characters as actual living people. If a psychological novelist were to write out a professional analysis of one's best friend, it may fairly be doubted whether one would recognize the description. In fact, in real life it is only criminals whom we are expected to recognize by anthropometric memoranda—by the length of the index finger, the breadth of the ear, the distance between the eyes, and by the lines on the finger tips.

Now Mr. Meredith avoids all anthropometric statistics and chemical analysis and gives us the very counterfeit presentment of men and women as in actual life they go visibly and audibly past us; and yet he so seizes his moments for portraiture that the soul, the inner life, the character, photographs itself on the retina of a sensitive on-looker like a composite picture.

He makes all his characters and scenes and all the life he portrays instinct with truth; and yet this truth is implicit; the author very rarely indulges in pretentious talk on these topics. For the most part, he is apparently busy putting before us the picturesque aspects of life and its dramatic moments.

This fondness of his for brilliance of surface, for vividness of portrayal, accounts for many peculiarities of Mr. Mere-

dith's method,—among them for the use of what may be termed *Meredith mosaic*. His opening chapters are nearly always curious composites, made up of dozens of little speeches, little acts, little scenes, collected from a series of years, and fitted together into a more or less homogeneous whole. He dislikes formal exposition; he instinctively shrinks from discoursing through wearisome pages on the early lives of the actors in his story, on the formative influences, for example, which had moulded the characters of Aminta and Weyburn up to the moment when the continuous action of *Lord Ormont* begins. Yet the "fuller portraiture" requires that this knowledge be in some way ensured to his readers. Hence he puts before us such skillfully chosen bits of Aminta's and Weyburn's early lives, that while our imaginations are always kept busy with words and tones and acts and looks, we are at the same time inveigled into a knowledge of minds and hearts and motives. Chapters constructed on this plan are curiously without continuity of action and often seem puzzling in their fragmentariness. But they certainly combine in an unusual degree vividness of portrayal with suggestiveness of interpretation.

Another means by which Mr. Meredith secures his brilliance of surface, his glowing color, is through his lavish use of figures. Mr. Meredith is a poet subdued by the spirit of his age to work in its most popular form, the novel; but even in prose his imagination will not be gainsaid, and everywhere we find in his style the sensuous concreteness and symbolism of poetry. "Absent or present, she was round him like the hills of a valley. She was round his thoughts—caged them; however high, however far they flew, they were conscious of her." * * * "Aminta drove her questioning heart as a vessel across blank circles of sea where there was nothing save the solitary heart for answer." In no other contemporary English fiction do we come upon pass-

ages like these and realize with a sudden pang of delight that we are in the region of poetry where imaginative beauty is an end in itself.

Very often, of old, it used to be Nature that enticed Mr. Meredith into these ravishing escapades; in *Lord Ormont* he seems pretty nearly to have broken with Nature. Yet, now and then, he puts before us a bit of the outside world with a compression of phrase, a brilliance of technique, and an imaginative atmosphere, not easily to be matched.

"A wind was rising. The trees gave their swish of leaves, the river darkened the patch of wrinkles, the bordering flags amid the reed-blades dipped and streamed." * * *

"The trees were bending, the water hissing, the grasses all this way and that, like the hands of a delirious people in surges of wreck." * * *

"Thames played round them on his pastoral pipes. Bee-note and woodside black-bird, and meadow cow, and the leap of the fish of the silver rolling rings, composed the music."

But often as Mr. Meredith's imagination seeks and realizes the beautiful, it still more often works in the grotesque and decks out his subject with Arabesque detail. His satirical comment on the life he portrays finds its way to the reader through the constant innuendoes of figurative language.

"She probably regarded the wedding by law as the end a woman has to aim at, and is annihilated by hitting; one flash of success and then extinction, like a boy's cracker on the pavement." * * *

"Thither he walked, a few minutes after noon prepared for cattishness. * * * he would have to crush her if she humped and spat, and he hoped to be allowed to do it gently. * * * Lady Charlotte put on her hump of the feline defensive; then his batteries opened fire and her's barked back on him."

That Mr. Meredith often overworks these grotesque figures even his warmest admirers must admit. There is a passage in the opening chapter of *Beauchamp's Career*, where for two pages he describes the creation of an artificial war-panic under the figure of "a deliberate saddling of our ancient nightmare of Invasion." Before Mr. Meredith consents to have done with this figure, even his most obsequious admirers must be desolated at his persistence. One is tempted to borrow the figure and to call this kind of writing Mr. Meredith's nightmare style, when a figure like a nightmare gets the bit in its teeth and goes racing across country with the author madly grimacing on its back.

In point of fact, the imaginative or figurative quality of his style is probably what costs Mr. Meredith most readers. His perpetually shifting brilliances prove very wearisome to certain eyes. He is too much of a flash-light or has too much of the flourish of a Roman candle for those who pride themselves on their devotion to the steady effulgence of the petroleum evening-lamp. Hazlitt used to tell people who objected to Spenser's *Fairy Queen* on the ground of the allegory that after all the poetry was good poetry and the allegory would not bite them. But if you similarly urge upon the objectors to Mr. Meredith's style, that a story of his is too great to be neglected because of mere questions of phrasing, they are very likely to tell you that they cannot see the story for the glare of the style; just there lies their point.

Undoubtedly, at times, Mr. Meredith seems glaringly willful in his rejection of ordinary rhetorical canons; there is something, too, of a flourish in his eccentricity; and often, apparently out of sheer bravado, he inserts in his stories rollicking grotesque passages, or throws at the critics long sentences full of the clash of metaphors. One may fancy his exclaiming with Browning,

"Well, British public, ye that like me not,
(God love you!) and will have your proper laugh
At the dark question, laugh it! I laugh first."

But after all isn't he right in maintaining his individuality against all-comers? Can any one who understands the true nature of an individual style and its self-revealing power, wish Mr. Meredith's style less racy, less figurative, less original? Surely, it is better to bear the impress of a nature like Mr. Meredith's than those that have become smooth and shiny with conventional use,—always providing that the metal be twenty-carats fine. The intimacy of the relation that Mr. Meredith's style makes possible between ordinary folk and a great and original personality is something that cannot be too highly prized in these days of conventionality and democratic averages. The words of most writers nowadays give us no clue to their individualities. "Tête-à-tête with Lady Duberly?" exclaims the man in the play. "Nay, sir, tête-à-tête with ten-thousand people." Private ownership in words and phrases seems in danger of becoming even more speedily than private ownership in land a thing of the past. The distinction of Mr. Meredith's style is something to be devoutly grateful for. One would infinitely rather have a notion of the world as it gives an account of itself in Mr. Meredith's mind than a conventional scheme of things drawn out in the stereotyped phrases of the rhetorician.

Possibly, however, there is one sound reason for wishing that Mr. Meredith would be just a little less insistent on differences and would now and then "mitigate the rancour of his tongue;" that reason is based on the fear that in this stupid world of ours compromise and conventionality are needed to secure any adequate hearing. It seems a great pity that so many people should be frightened away from Mr. Meredith's work by its mannerism and should be oblivious to some of the most suggestive current criticism of modern

life. To Americans it seems specially to be regretted that English people should be so little receptive of the ideas of the most comprehensive and the least insular of their novelists. Mr. Meredith has grasped English life in its whole range and in all its vast complexity. He has dealt with the high and the low, with rustic and cockney, with plebian and aristocrat, with the world of letters and the world of art and the world of fashion with the modern "conquerors" of social power and position, and with the hereditary great. All this vast range of life he has portrayed with the hereditary great. All this vast range of life he has portrayed with equal vividness and with the same unflinching sympathy and insight; and yet his point of view is always curiously outside the radius of the British Isles, and many of his implications are by no means favorable to the present organization of English social and political life. Of course, it may be this very lack of insularity that prevents a better understanding between him and his public. Detachment on his part may make attachment on their part impossible. And yet this ought not to be so; for despite his occasional severities and the all-pervading independence and individuality of his tone, no one has loved English life more heartily, studied it more painstakingly, or represented it more patriotically. Indeed, certain of its important aspects can be found adequately portrayed only in Mr. Meredith's pages; for example, the genuine irresponsibility of the most brilliant English life. No other novels offer us such pictures of the world of the luxuriously idle and systematically frivolous, of the habits and homes of the people who have never been wont to give an account of themselves to others, who have made idling into a fine art, and feel that the land exists for them to shoot over, and the sea for them to sail on in yachts. The so-called society-novelist succeeds admirably with the gowns and the etiquette of this region, but gives us for its inhabitants a lam-

entable lot of insipidities. But Mr. Meredith's aristocrats have brains as well as deportment and decorations; they have the mental and moral idiom, the wit and the culture and the weight of men of birth and position, their prejudices, too, and perversities. That some wildness and even rankness of style should keep the British public from enjoying Mr. Meredith's vigorous and sympathetic studies of its idolized "upper classes" seems strange; and even more regrettable than strange it seems to those who find running all through Mr. Meredith's patriotic portrayal subtle insinuations of a criticism of English life most un-insular in its tenor and most salutary in its drift.

As to the precise value of the lesson latent in *Lord Ormont* there is, of course, much dubious questioning possible. The points at issue, however, are of a kind on which perhaps only the Ulysses of the matrimonial ocean, "much-experienced men" in the storms and sunshine of married life, are in a condition to pronounce. Nevertheless ordinary people may at least admire the conscientious care with which Mr. Meredith has safeguarded his dangerous advice and his somewhat revolutionary plea for the freedom of woman. His preceding novel, *One of our Conquerors*, was from first to last a strenuously faithful study of the penalties that follow infringement of social conventions in the matter of marriage. The book might have been named *Mrs. Burman's Revenge*. Mrs. Burman concentrated in her unprepossessing person all the mighty forces of prejudice which the society of the western world puts into play to protect one of its sacred institutions, marriage. Poor Nataly, who had ventured after happiness outside of conventional limits, lost happiness and finally life itself solely through her agonizingly constant consciousness of false adjustment of her social environment. She had built her house below the level of the dykes, to use Weyburn's metaphor, and her persistent sense of an impending

ing destruction sapped her life.

Having thus set forth with the elaborateness of a three-volume novel and with the utmost power of his imagination the almost resistless might of social conventions, their importance, and the danger of defying them, Mr. Meredith in his last book ventures to plead for the individual against society, and to assert the right of the individual occasionally to rebel against a blinded tyrannizing convention. "Laws are necessary instruments of the majority; but when they grind the son's human being to dust for their maintenance, their enthronement is the rule of the savage's old deity, sniffing blood-sacrifice."

The case of immolation that Mr. Meredith studies is meant, despite some very special features, to be typical. The veteran Lord Ormont stands as the representative, the most polished and prepossessing representative possible, of the class of men for whom woman is still merely the daintiest, the most exquisite toy that a benevolent Providence has created for the delectation of the sons of Adam. Weyburn is the ideal modern man of "spiritual valiancy," every whit as vigorous and virile as Lord Ormont, but mentally and morally of immeasurably greater flexibility, and keenly alive to the needs of his time and the signs of social change. He, too, is doubtless meant to be a type,—so far as Mr. Meredith allows himself in character—drawing the somewhat dangerous luxury of types; he is to be taken as the most efficient possible member of a modern social organization, where the standards of individual excellence are fixed, not primarily by the organism's need of defence against external foes, but by what is requisite for the inner expansion and peaceful evolution of society. Aminta, "the most beautiful woman of her time," has been half-secretly married to Lord Ormont in the Spanish legation at Madrid, after a few weeks of travelling courtship; forthwith she has become in his eyes *his* Aminta,

his lovely Xarifa, his beautiful slave, whom his soul delighteth to honor,—with ever a due sense of the make-believe character of her sovereignty and with a changelessly cynical conviction of the essential inferiority of the feminine nature. From his "Knightly amatony" adulation, from the caressing glances of his "old-world eye upon women," from his "massive selfishness and icy inaccessibility to emotion," Aminta finally revolts, and takes refuge with Weyburn because with him she finds "comprehension," "encouragement," "life and air," freedom to "use her qualities." "His need and her need rushed together somewhere down the skies."

Doubtless, all this seems dangerously near the old doctrine of elective affinities, on which organized society has never looked kindly. But once more we cannot but admire the care with which Mr. Meredith has limited his acceptance and recommendation of the principle. If it is to be operative only in a society in which a schoolmaster of spiritual valiancy is the popular hero, the ideal of manhood, and in which the most beautiful women of their time desert famous military leaders to become part-owners in boarding-schools, Mr. Meredith can hardly be accused of recommending very serious or far reaching changes in the present state of the marriage contract.

Whatever one may think of the special moral of the book, the nobly optimistic tone of the whole is inspiring. Mr. Meredith's vigorous optimism and his suggestion of endless vistas of social progress contrast curiously with Mr. Hardy's harping on the age of the earth, Druidical ruins, and the irony of a cruel Nature. Mr. Meredith, like his own Weyburn, is "one of the lovers of life, beautiful to behold, when we spy into them; generally their aspect is an enlivenment, whatever may be the carving of their features," or, we may add, the eccentricity of their style. He is one of those who

"have a cold morning on their foreheads," and whose "gaze is to the front in hungry animation." His optimism is doubly grateful because it is not the optimism of untempered youth, but, like Browning's, the optimism of a man who has sounded and tried life in all its shallows and depths, has sailed far and wide over its surface, and yet possesses a genuine Ulysses-like hunger for achievement and belief in worth. In this age when the decadents like the Philistines be upon us and when the weariness of much learning and of much feeling weighs down so many eyelids, it seems strange that the virility and vigor and courage of Mr. Meredith do not find welcome everywhere among the sane-minded.

LEWIS E. GATES.





A DRAWING BY JOHN SLOAN

The Search.

A Youth.

Why dost thou hide from these,
Out along the hills hillsiding
Each in his pleid?
Why, Happiness? They are thy sisters.

A Voice.

The unasking, the unknowing,
Thou only I make glad,
Like Dian grandly going
Is the sleeping shepherd-lad.
Men that pursue ~~know~~ ^{follow} not
To follow is my lot.

A Youth.

Happiness, secret one,
Heart-beat of the April weather,
Where art thou found?
Tell lest I err too, yonder in the sun.

A Voice.

Call in thine eye from ether,
Thy feet from fat ground;
Seek Honour in this heather.
With austere purple wound
Serve her: she will reveal
Me, hand-like, at thy heel.

Louise Douglas Quincy.

CONTEMPORARIES—IV
LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

“NORTH from the beautiful islands,
North from the headlands and highlands,
The long sea-wall,
The white ships flee with the swallow;
The day-beams follow and follow,
Glitter and fall.

The brown ruddy children that fear not,
Lean over the quay, and they hear not
Warnings of lips;
For their hearts go a-sailing, a-sailing,
Out from the wharves and the wailing
After the ships.”

Such are the first lines of the first page of a little volume of poems, called “Songs at the Start,” published in Boston ten years ago. It is not a particularly original or characteristic poem, this “Gloucester Harbor,” yet it is smooth and sweet with a charm reminiscent of Longfellow in his sea verse. It repeats his cadences and the color of his peaceful reverie just touched with pathos.

“Woe, woe, for the old fascination!
The women make deep lamentation
In starts and in slips;
Here always is hope unavailing,
Here always the dreamers are sailing
After the ships!”

This might easily have been written of the gentle poet of the Charles, who has indeed laid so many young writers under

his spell. The volume as a whole, however, hardly keeps up our delight of these opening lines and contains little else, I fancy, that its author will care to preserve, with the exception of one brief lyric.

SPRING.

“Again the bloom, the northward flight,
The fount freed at its silver height,
And down the deep woods to the lowest,
The fragrant shadows scarred with light.

“O inescapable joy of spring !
For thee the world shall leap and sing ;
But by her darkened door thou goest
Forever as a spectral thing.”

There is in these verses alone any hint of the racy and wonderful style Miss Guiney was soon to develop. But her second venture in the sea of letters, “The White Sail,” published some three years later, show a marked advance upon the first and contains a number of distinctly original and notable poems. It is full of that delightful freshness of health which lends her words their inspiring quality. The joy of her lyric mood is as clear and inevitable as the “inescapable joy of spring.” Absolute sincerity and health possess her lines and bear them with a rush beyond the commonplace monotony of minor chords. She is never dolorous and never dull. Even natural sorrow is so infused with the perennial gladness of this beautiful world as to become scarcely more poignant than an ancient tale of pathos.

“The young Sun rides the mist anew ; his cohorts follow
from the sea.

Let Aztec children shout and sue, the Persian bend a thankful knee :

Those glad Auroral eyes shall beam not anywhere hence-
forth on me.

"Up with the banners on the height, set every matin bell
astir!

The tree-top choirs carouse in light; the dew's on phlox and
lavender;

Ah, mockery! for, worlds away, the heart of morning beats
with her."

The exquisite touch is here, the lightness of hand, the perfection of temper. Not to be overborne by the turbulence of our days, nor too much moved by any sadness, is the first lesson of art,—art, that helper and continual solace of the world's life. So that the great artist must be first of all joyous, then assured, then fervent, then unrestrained and out of all bounds save those of his own conscience and contriving. His only patent is originality. And while he says something new about all the facts of experience, he brings them all to the touchstone of his unjaded spirit. He must not merely see Homer's world with an eye trained to minuter vision and wider sweep, he must bring to its appreciation a zest as wholly unspoiled as that of a savage. If the revelations of knowledge mean for him the dissolution of old faiths and historic creeds, he must not despond; he must have merely so much faith the more, believing that what has come safely so far may be trusted to journey to the end without any anxiety of his. He must know that while dogma, which is only fossilized creed, can never be anything more than a curiosity, the need of worship is a craving of the human heart, a living desire neither to be ridiculed nor overthrown. If the discoveries of science seem for the time to overshadow the achievements of art, he must only rejoice, remembering that art has been the mother of science, and that all science has returned the benefits of its parent a thousand fold. When he hears

on every side the detractors of art belauding science and de-crying the work of the artist as a thing long past use to the world, he will recall similar periods of history and smile to think how art has always been entirely equal to the task of absorbing whatever innovations science might unfold. He will keep in mind forever and ever the necessary place of art in the general economy of the state, and no temporary de-thronement of his mistress will cause his loyalty to swerve. While the artist, then, ponders the word of God in the wind through the tree, he will be glad and brave before all other men.

But the artist will be the gladdest and bravest of men only if he is great. For the same sensitiveness of inward vision which makes the great artist the happiest of his kind will make a lesser spirit the most miserable. Revelation will come to him as a burden too heavy to be borne, not as a rapture too keen to be expressed. So you will find all the minor poets of a nation piping in a minor key, while their greater and robuster brothers are bearing up the eternal chorus of the world, refrain after refrain, to the final triumph of right and love and beauty and goodness, to the final assurance of gladness and the contentedness of peace.

The true artist, therefore, in these qualities of courage and hope must be distinctly the most manly of his fellows, and there is no more manly note in American letters to-day than that which rings through the lyrics of the little lady of *Auburndale*. She can put more valor in a single line than one can squeeze from our periodical poets in a twelve month. For it is a sorry but certain fact that our magazines are fast becoming the *nincompoopiana* of literature. And this not because they are ill-conducted, but because their practical success depends upon it. We must always make allowance in any art for the influence of popular demand. When we consider the circulation necessary to make a book or a mag-

azine a practical success, the wonder is, not that contemporary letters are so poor, but that they are so good.

A ballad like "Tarpeia" or a single lyric like "The Wild Ride," has virility enough to furnish the ordinary minor poet with lyric passion ten times over. I am permitted to quote a version of the latter lyric, longer by two stanzas than that contained in "The White Sail."

"I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses
All day, the commotion of sinewy mane-tossing horses;
All night, from their cells, the importunate tramping and
neighing.

"Let cowards and laggards fall back; but alert to the saddle,
Straight, grim and abreast, vault our weather-worn galloping
legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the one gracious woman that
loves him.

"The road is thro' dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or
entice us:

What odds? We are knights, and our souls are but bent
on the riding!

"Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Nor here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

"A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world, and her pitiful beauty!
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

"I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day the commotion of sinewy mane-tossing horses,
All night, from their cells, the importunate tramping and
neighing.

"We spur to a land of no name, out-racing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark, like the sparks from the anvil.
Thou ledest, O God! All's well with thy troopers that
follow."

To find just such another dauntless note, the very elation of courage, we must go to Miss Guiney's own new volume, "A Roadside Harp," a particularly pleasing piece of book-making, by the way. There in "The Kings," and in the following extract from "The Knight Errant," we are touched in the same strain.

"Spirits of old that bore me,
And set me, meek of mind,
Between great dreams before me,
And deeds as great behind,
Knowing humanity my star
As first abroad I ride,
Shall help me wear, with every scar,
Honor at eventide.

* * * * *

"O give my youth, my faith, my sword,
Choice of the heart's desire:
A short life in the saddle, Lord!
Not long life by the fire.

"Forethought and recollection
Rivet mine armor gay!
The passion for perfection
Redeem my failing way!"

"The passion for perfection," that is so characteristic of our time! Indeed all our artistic activity may be said to be distributed among two classes, those who have a passion for perfection, and those who have a madness for reform.

While the latter are running with socialism, realism, "veritism," the New Ethic, the New Education, the New Gran-ny's Nightcap, and all sorts of feather toppers whatever, the former are frittering away their efforts in symbolism and the deceptive sound. In matters of faith, too, the latter are devoured by a thousand untried notions and nostrums for the betterment of this precious race of pigmies, while the former have turned back to a paganism older than Athens, a paganism on which the shadow of the time has passed as a cloud on the sea. "To a Dog's Memory," "Open Time," "Athassel Abbey," "A Friend's Song for Limdisius," there is no more gracious and winning and impassioned note in English letters to-day than rings through these beautiful and pagan, perfectly pagan, lyrics. Listen to the opening of the last :

"The breath of dew, and twilight's grace,
Be on the lonely battle place;
And to so young, so kind a face,
The long protecting grasses cling!
(Alas, alas,
The one inexorable thing!)

"In rocky hollows cool and deep,
The bees our boyhood hunted sleep;
The early moon from Ida's steep
Comes to the empty wrestling-ring.
(Alas, alas,
The one inexorable thing!)

"Upon the widowed wind recede
No echoes of the shepherd's reed,
And children without laughter lead
The war-horse to the watering.
(Alas, alas,
The one inexorable thing!)"

And again listen to the close of "Athassel Abbey."

- "But I am wind that passes
In ignorant wild tears,
Uplifted from the grasses,
Blown to the void of years,

"Blown to the void, yet sighing
In thee to merge and cease,
Last breath of beauty's dying,
Of sanctity, of peace!

"Tho' use nor place forever
Unto my soul befall,
By no beloved river
Set in a saintly wall,

"Do thou by builders given
Speech of the dumb to be,
Beneath thine open heaven,
Athassel, pray for me!"

It is given to few poets to write so. And if such lines are not unmistakable proof of genius of the very finest lyric quality, one must be sadly deluded as to what is good and bad in English poetry. While this writer is thus so worthy a follower of the masters of song, she is in her serene unvexed temper at one with that eternal paganism which lies like the deep sea calms far below all passing storms of faction and fashion and the virulence of creed.

There are, it seems to me, two characteristics in Miss Guiney's work, either one of which would render her most worthy of distinction as a poet. The first is this pagan quality of joy, which she must inherit from our New England saint, Emerson; the second is a rich and [anything but modern quality of style entirely her own, yet one whose seeds

must have been sown by those robust and individual poets of the Elizabethan times. I find none of the verse-makers of to-day whose product is so markedly original and at the same time so free from affectation. It is easy to adopt this or that sort of originality at will,—to acquire a mannerism. But real style is an attitude of the heart, a frame of mind, quite impossible to imitate. When suffused by an abundant wholesome imagination, as in the author of "A Roadside Harp," such an attitude of spirit, such a power of style, becomes capable of the rarest self-revelation and expression in art. Take for instance that lovely "Ballad of Kenelm." So absolutely fresh and unhackneyed in every line, yet so free from any taint of affectation, it could only have been born of the most genuine poetic impulse working through the sincerest and most unconscious style.

"They travelled down the lane,
An hour's dust they made."

"But once I hear the blackbird in Leighlin hedges call,
The foolishness is on me, and the wild tears fall"

"He has done with roofs and men,
Open, Time, and let him pass."

"The gusty morns are here,
When all the reeds ride low with level spear."

These are the things, so simple in their loveliness, which look so easy to do, and which none but a master ever achieves. Like Browning, Miss Guiney has often a too curious and irresponsible fancy which leads her through perplexities of speech; she wrecks expression upon some thought too trivial or vague or remote to be worth the while; and yet like the great Victorian of "Pippa Passes" or "Home Thoughts from Abroad," she has at command a golden unmarred deliciousness of cadence and a smooth sufficiency of utterance, that make all rival effort toil in vain.

Nothing, for example, could be more winning in unstudied simplicity, more [graciously touched with haunting quiet, than these lines:

"When on the marge of evening the last blue light is broken,
And winds of dreamy odor are loosened from afar,
Or when my lattice opens, before the lark has spoken,
On dim laburnum-blossoms and morning's dying star,

"I think of thee, (O mine the more if other eyes be sleeping!)
Whose great and noonday splendor the many share and see,
While sacred and forever, some perfect law is keeping
The late and early twilight alone and sweet for me."

And so we lay aside this thin little volume of exquisite poetry, reassured that it is only the blind who can believe that the poets are all dead to-day, while there walks among us a very child of the old Greek spirit,

"Whose random hand
Struck from the dark whole scenes like these,
Archaic beauty, never planned
Nor reared by wan degrees,

"Which leaves an artist poor, and art
An earldom richer all her years;"

We lay it aside with one quotation more, summing up in a single couplet, itself worthy of the Greek Anthology, the light-hearted philosophy of that elder paganism, a hundred times overthrown by the casuistries of the schools, yet always returning with its unobtrusive solace, dauntless and unperturbed, to our human need at last. How large and sweet a benediction of farewell within the small compass of a score of words!

"Praise thou the Mighty Mother for what is wrought,
not me,
A nameless nothing-caring head asleep against her knee."

BLISS CARMAN.

NOTES

DR. A. CONAN DOYLE, M. Stéphane Mallarmé, and Mr. Kenneth Grahame are among the contributors to the new volume of **THE CHAP-BOOK**.

It is now announced that *The Green Carnation* was not written by Oscar Wilde and George Moore in collaboration, nor yet by "Dodo" Benson, as the papers stated, but by Mr. R. S. Hichens, heretofore unheard-of.

In these days when our colleges deal with the damnation of Dickens and it has become fashionable to decry him as a caricaturist, it is interesting to learn—and I have just heard, on no less an authority than Messrs. Chapman & Hall themselves—that the sales of his works last year were greater than ever before, greater even than when the books were new and their novelty just discovered. This is curious evidence I think, and little dreamt of. And it throws a fascinating light on the weight which the word of the teacher folk carries.

Mr. Gilbert Parker is expected to return to this country about the first of December.

Among the announcements of Mr. Wm. Heinemann (London) for fall publication is "Songs on Stone," by J. McNeil Whistler. "A series of lithographic drawings in colour by Mr. Whistler will appear from time to time in parts, under the above title."

It is a matter of no small regret to me—and, I fancy, to many others—that Mr. Arthur Sherburne Hardy finds his duties on the *Cosmopolitan* take up too much of his time to permit of a decent attention to original work. I confess I cannot help thinking much of his editing—he is fortunate in knowing good things when he sees them—but there are other good editors and we have so few writing-men in this country capable of doing anything that his retirement means a distinct loss. For my part, I wish he might let the magazine

go and attend to things which will count for more when a score of years are past.

"M. Ollivier Beauregard, an eminent Egyptologist, has dug up some mummy jokes, and is about to publish them in a



book dealing with Egyptian satires. I await the publication with interest. There are, it is said, only seven jokes in the world. All the rest are variants on these parent quips. And just as Professor Tyndall traced back all sentient beings to a lump of protoplasmic mud, so, I suspect, could a careful student of humour trace back the world's fun to a single primeval joke. I wonder what it was. Certainly this mummy humour should

bring us appreciably nearer to it. There must have been a time when the first man saw the first joke. It was a wonderful moment, whenever it was, pregnant with the laughter of the human race. It was the birth of a new sense. One

can only imagine the scene. Adam lying under a tree—doubtless a fig-tree, possibly the very one on which his



trousers grew—thinking vaguely that the world was full of many things. And presently he caught a view of those things upside down—its queer side. A strange charm caught him, and he laughed as he lay on the grass. And Eve came up to find him rolling about and holding his sides, and, wondering what strange disease this was, projected a plaster. What did she say when Adam told her the joke? Did she lie down and roll about too? Or did she simply say, 'stupid!'

Of course, all this is the merest

conjecture. Only I should like to know what was that elementary joke from which all other jokes flowed. Although it was probably a bad one."—*Pall Mall Budget*.

To one who is interested in books, the last number of *The Portfolio* will especially appeal. It is a monograph on "Bookbinding in France," by Mr. William Y. Fletcher, of the British Museum, and is illustrated with many reproductions—some in colour—of some splendid examples of the masters. It is really a valuable little history—at once comprehensive and concise—and full of attraction to those given to what is now termed "Bibliolatry."

In this issue of the CHAP-BOOK I publish four pictures by a new man, Mr. John Sloan. He is, I believe, a newspaper artist—on the *Philadelphia Inquirer*—but he is capable of doing very excellent book work—as age-end art goes. His drawings are full of interest and his handling of black and white is very good. The pictures are taken from *The Inland Printer*, the best printed paper in America, and I have to thank the editors for their kindness in granting permission.



BOOKS RECEIVED

MY LADY ROTHAS: A Romance by STANLEY J. WEYMAN. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. Illustrated. \$1.25

MADONNA and Other Poems by HARRISON S. MORRIS. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 700 copies only.

SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA by BLISS CARMAN and RICHARD HOVEY. Boston: Copeland & Day. Illustrated. \$1.00. 750 copies only.

A DRAMA IN DUTCH by Z. Z. New York: Mac Millan & Co. \$1.00

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CHILDREN OF CIRCUMSTANCE by IOTA (Author
of "A Yellow Aster.") New York : D. Appleton &
Co. Cloth.

THE RELIGION OF MOSES by Rabbi ADOLPH MOSES.
Louisville: Flexner Brohers. \$1.00.

HEIGH-HO! MY LADDIE, O! and other child verses
by WILLIAM D. LORD. Evanston: The Enterprise.

THE DEFENSE OF THE BRIDE and other Poems
by ANNA KATHARINE GREEN. New York : G. P. Put-
nam's Sons. \$1.00.

INTIMATIONS OF THE BEAUTIFUL and Poems by
MADISON J. CAWEIN. New York : G. P. Putnam's Sons.
\$1.00.

THE MANXMAN by HALL CAINE. New York : D.
Appleton & Co.

CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS by ARTHUR H.
SMITH. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co.

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